

Opening Statement of the Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of the TSCA Modernization Act and FCC Process Reform Act
June 2, 2015
(As Prepared for Delivery)

Modernizing our government for the 21st century and restoring transparency and accountability have long been priorities for this committee, and today's markup is a long time in the making. We will consider two proposals that have each earned broad bipartisan support in the past and will make meaningful reforms that the American people deserve.

The first bill we'll consider is H.R. 2576, the TSCA Modernization Act of 2015, which is the product of a multi-year, multi-Congress effort. This bill represents the most significant change to chemical regulation since TSCA was first enacted in 1976. It contains an innovative approach to evaluating and, if necessary, managing risk of injury from chemical exposure.

Chemicals may be selected for scientific risk evaluation either by EPA or by a chemical manufacturer. If a chemical turns out to pose an unreasonable risk, EPA has a variety of options for managing the risk ranging from notice requirements to an outright ban.

But before regulating, the EPA must answer some important questions. What is the magnitude of exposure to the chemical? What are its benefits for various uses? What the economic consequences of regulating it? Is the regulation cost-effective? Are alternatives available that benefit health or the environment? Will they be available when the restriction takes effect?

If a restriction on a chemical is applied to an article containing the chemical, will the restriction actually mitigate the risk?

And if EPA wants to restrict or ban a chemical it must allow a reasonable transition period.

The results of this new approach are that consumers and people world-wide can have greater confidence than ever that chemicals on the market in the U.S. are safe for their intended uses; and products can flow freely in interstate and global commerce. This bill is good for consumers, good for trade, and good for the environment. I congratulate my colleagues Chairman Upton, Chairman Shimkus and their partners, Mr. Tonko and Mr. Pallone, on crafting a bill this committee can be proud to call its own.

The second bill we will consider is H.R. 2583, the FCC Process Reform Act, authored by Subcommittee Chairman Walden and Mr. Kinzinger. Last Congress, this committee, and the House both passed this bill unanimously to institute real, commonsense reform at the Federal Communications Commission. We voted to improve process and create meaningful transparency at an agency that touches many aspects of our daily lives. I am pleased to see the subcommittee working on such an important bill again this Congress. Due process and transparency are fundamental principles of good government and I commend all members for their strong commitment to making meaningful improvements. Who can argue against greater transparency and accountability?

Sensible reforms have been offered by members of both parties that will significantly improve the function of the FCC. Our committee operates openly with debate, amendments, and votes occurring under the watchful eye of the public. The FCC's decision-making process should be held to a similar standard of transparency.

I support these bills and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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